THE

THIRTY-SECOND ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST ASSOCIATION;

Maintaining, invariably, the important doctrines of three equal persons in the Godhead; eternal and personal election; Original Sin; particular redemption; Free Justification by the righteousness of Christ imputed; the absolute necessity of the spirit's operation; efficacious grace in regeneration; the obligation of believers to attend to all the precepts of Scripture; the final perseverance of real believers; the resurrection of the dead; the general judgment of the last day; the eternal happiness of the righteous, and the everlasting misery of such as die impenitent; the baptism of believers by immersion, and the independence of their respective churches.

HELD WITH THE NEW PROVIDENCE CHURCH,

Amite Co., Mi., Oct. 5th, 6th & 7th, 1839.

LIBERTY, MI.

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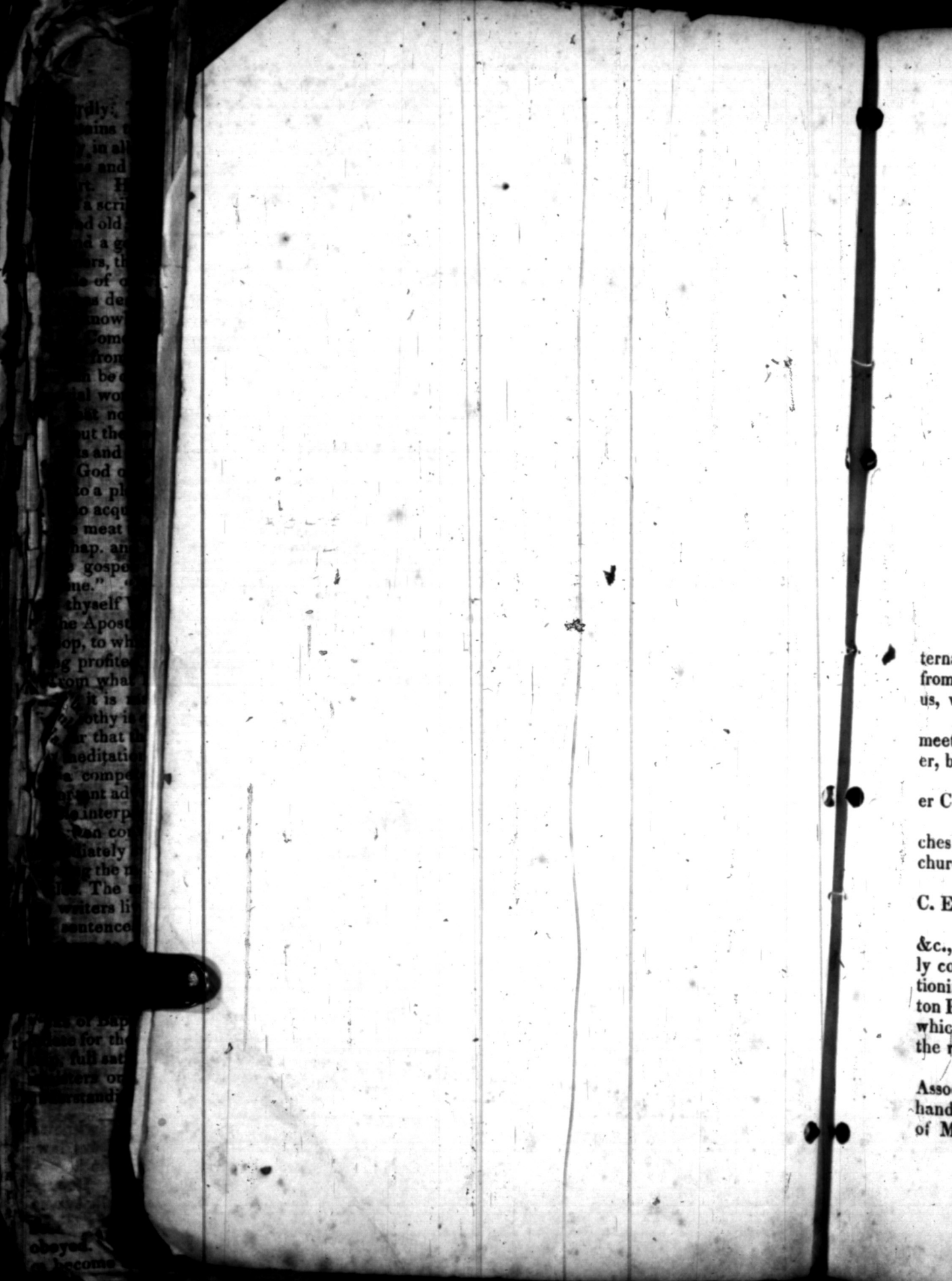
1839.



MINUTES.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5th, 1839.

Brother Young being absent, brother T. M. Bond, his alternate, preached the introductory sermon at 11 o'clock, A. M. from Psalms 126, v. 3; "The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad."

After a short intermission the Delegates assembled in the meeting-house, and business was opened with singing and prayer, by brother C. Felder.

Brother H. D. F. Roberts, the Clerk, being absent, brother C. E. Pinkney was appointed Clerk, pro. tem.

1. Letters were received, and read, from twenty-six churches; the names of the Delegates enrolled, and the state of the churches minuted.

2. Brother C. Felder was chosen Moderator, and brother C. E. Pinkney, Clerk.

3. After reading the articles of Faith, rules of decorum, &c., adopted by this body; letters were received from two newly constituted churches, by the hands of their Delegates, petitioning admittance into the Association, viz: Mt. Ebal, Livingston Parish, La., and Mt. Meriah, East Baton Rouge Parish, La., which churches were admitted, and their Delegates received the right hand of fellowship by the Moderator.

4. Letters of correspondence were received from sister Associations, as follows, to wit: from the Leaf River, by the hands of her messenger, Elder Martin Chadick, with a package of Minutes; from the Pearl River, by Elders Wm. Fortenbury

and Willis Magee, with a package of her Minutes; from tha Union, by Elders, James Thigpen, Wm. Mullins, and V. W. Brock, also a bundle of Minutes. These messengers were received and invited to seats.

5. The following brethren were appointed to write letters of correspondence, viz: J. B. Smith, to the Union; A. W. Pool, to the Pearl River, and D. M. Chaney, to the Leaf River.

6. The following brethren were appointed messengers of correspondence, viz: J. B. Smith and W. B. Wall, to the Pearl River; Z. Reeves and H. Wall, to the Union, and S. Coker, Z. Reeves and T. M. Bond, to the Leaf River Associations.

7. Brethren J. Jenkins, T. M. Bond and R. Quin, were appointed a committee to arrange the preaching during the session, who reported as follows, viz: that brethren Fortenbury, Reeves and Thigpen preach on Lord's day in the order of their names, and that S. Coker conclude with exortation and prayer.

8. Appointed a Committee of Arrangement and revision, consisting of brethren S. Coker, Z. Reeves and J. B. Smith, with the Moderator and Clerk.

9. Adjourned to meet at half past 8 o'clock, Monday morning, concluding prayer by brother Smith.

The brethren appointed preached on Lord's day to a large and attentive congregation, and so interesting were the subjects of discussion, such were the energy, convictive arguments and zeal of the ministers, and such was the apparent effect in the congregation, that we hope good was done.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 8th, 1839.

The Association met pursuant to adjournment; prayer by brother Thigpen.

10. The committee to arrange the preaching reported that brethren Brock, Wm. Mullins, D. Collins and H. Wall preach in the order of their names, which report was received, and the committee discharged.

11. The committee of arrangement and revision reported, which report was received.

12. The Circular prepared by brother Bond was called for, read and unanimously adopted.

13. The letters of correspondence were read and adopted.

14. The Hephzibah Church complained to the Association that Jackson church had received and retained in her fellowship, Elder E. Courtney, whom she had previously excluded. Wherenpon, it was resolved, that this Association recommend the above churches to settle the difficulty among themselves, and for the accomplishment of that object, to call such help from sister churches as they may think proper.

15. Resolved, that the epitomised confession of faith, found on the title page of the minutes of the Hudson River Baptist Association, appear, in future, on the title page of the minutes of this body.

16. Resolved, that in the opinion of this Association there are three things necessary to constitute Gospel Baptism, viz: a regular authorised administrator, a believer in Christ, and immersion in the name of the Holy Trinity; and as such, those ministers who have been excluded from our communion for immorality or heresy, are not proper administrators, and consequently, immersion administered by Campbelite ministers, or reforming teachers, as they call themselves, is not valid baptism.

17. Resolved, that this Association recommend to the ministers connected with this body, the propriety of holding a Union meeting on every fifth Lord's-day, and two days before, and that said meetings be held the ensuing year in the following order, viz: 1st. at Hephzibah; 2d. in Fort Adams; 3d. at Jerusalem; 4th. at the Hopewell church; and that the churches desiring those meetings, in future, petition for them in their letters to the Association.

18. Resolved, that in future our messengers of correspondence receive two dollars per day for the time they are in actual service.

19. Resolved, that the thanks of this Association are due to the brethren, and other citizens of this neighborhood, for the kind and hospitable manner in which they have entertained the Delegates, and others, who have attended the meeting.

20. Resolved, that the next meeting of this body be held with the Ebenezar Church, Amite county, Mi., commencing on Saturday, preceding the 1st Lord's day, in October, 1840.

21. Resolved, that brother Smith write the next Circular Letter.

22. Resolved, that brother Felder preach the introductory sermon, at the next meeting of this body, and that brother Coker be his alternate.

23. Resolved, that brother Felder superintend the printing and destribution of 1,000 copies of these minutes, and that he draw on the Treasurer for funds to deiray the expenses of printing; and also, that he receive fifteen dollors for his services.

24. The Committee of Finance made the following report, which report was received and the committee discharged, viz:

In the Treasurer's hands,	$38 75	
Contributions from the churches,	133 75	
		172 50
Paid J. Young, messenger of Corres.,	13 00	
Paid Z. Reeves, do. do.	4 00	
Paid for printing these minutes,	75 00	
Paid C. Felder, as superintendent,	15 00	
		107 00
Remaining in the hands of the Treasurer,		$ 65 50

Prayer by brother Young and the Association adjourned.

CHARLES FELDER, Moderator.

C. E. PINKNEY, Clerk.

The following ordained ministers belong to this Association, viz: Shadrick Coker, Jesse Young, Charles Felder, H. D. F. Roberts, —— Allen, Jas. R. Smith, Zachariah Reeves, Wilson Clark, Howell Wall, William B. Wall, Thomas M. Bond, A. W. Poole. Licensed ministers, N. A. Schillinger, John W. Miller, W. Allen and D. M. Chainey.

llowing report,
discharged, viz:
8 75
3 75
— 172 50
3 00
4 00
5 00
5 00
— 107 00
$ 65 50
adjourned.
Moderator.

Association,
r, H. D. F.
ves, Wilson
ond, A. W.
W. Miller,

TABLE OF THE CHURCHES COMPOSING THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST ASSOCIATION, FOR 1839.

ABSENT DELEGATES MARKED THUS *.

NAMES OF CHURCHES.	NAMES OF DELEGATES	Baptized,	Rec'd. by letter,	Restored,	Dismissed,	Excluded,	Dead,	Total number,	No. of Ministers,	Time of Meeting,	Post Offices,	Contributions,
N. Providence	R. Wilkinson, J. Jenkins,					4		70		4th	Liberty,	$7 00
Ebenezar,	R. Johns, W. Jackson,		1	1		4	2	59		1st	Rose Hill,	11 00
East-Fork,	C. Felder, J. Wilson,	1	1		5	2	2	53	1	2d	Liberty,	6 00
Zion Hill,	M. Seal, A. Butler,		6	3	2			76		1st	Liberty,	5 00
Shiloh,	John Tison, C. Edwards,*							19		4th	Whitstown	2 00
Jerusalem,	W. B. Wall, C. J. Wall,	1	1		5	1		107	2	4th	Liberty,	5 00
Perce's Creek,	no delegation,							7			Woodville,	
Hephzibah,	S. Walker, C. E. Pinkney, Rich. Taylor,	1	1	2	12	10	5	153	1	2d	Clinton, La	9 50
Mt. Nebo,	P. Bankston, D. Sanders,			1	2			57		4th	Marbrays-ville,	4 00
Mar's Hill,	R. Chadwick, M. Whitington				7	1		27			Liberty,	5 75
Mt. Zion,	W. Clark, George Cloy,		1		6			30	1	2d	Meadville,	5 00
Hopewell,	John Ford, Nedum Lee,*		1					22		1st	Meadville,	4 25
Gallilee,	J. Straughan, T. Causey,	1			2	1		32		3d	Lebanon,	5 00
Salem,	R. Quin, C. Tate,	3	2			1	1	70		3d	Holmesvile	
Pinckneyville,	T. Hunter, N. Daws,*	18	2	1				42		2d	Ft. Adams,	5 00
Friendship,	S. Coker, J. Reeves,		3		1			37	1	3d	Holmesvile	6 00
Beulah,	R. F. Sibley, A. K. Adison,		1	2				56		4th	Sibila,	5 00
Ramah,	Jesse Young, John Gill,		2	6	1	1	2	39		3d	Smithdale,	5 00
Bethel,	n't represent'd											5 00
Jackson,	S. M. Brian, F. Brian,	17	6		2	2	2	72	1	2d	Jackson, La	5 00
Clinton,	J. B. Smith, A. W. Poole,				5	1	1	34	2	3d	Clinton, La	2 50
Hebron,	T. M. Bond, J. S. Phelps,*				2	2		12	1	1st	Beach Hill,	3 00
Bethlehem,	D. Morgan, D. M. Chainy,	1			4			40	1	1st	Burlington	5 75
Mt. Enon,	J. H. Wright, J. Strickland,		7		1			22		2d	Greensburr	3 00
Mt. Pleasant,	Z. Reeves, T. Reeves,		3		2			37		4th	Holmesvile	5 00
Liberty,	David Lea, J. Turnipseed,		3		2		1	39		3d	Liberty,	5 00
Baton Rouge,	P. H. Harbor, W. Thomas,*	5	3		4			28	1	1& 3	B. Rouge,	3 00
Mt. Ebal,	R. Hutchinson	9	1	1		1		23		1st	Springfield	3 00
Mt. Mariah,	Martin Naul, D. Lewis,	3	2					16		4th	Burlington	3 00

CIRCULAR LETTER.

The Mississippi Baptist Association, to the churches she represents, sendeth christian salutation.

Dear Brethren: from a custom of long standing in our denomination, it becomes our duty to present you with a circular address. We therefore address you on the subject of christian communion. It must, we think, be allowed that the order and connexion of positive appointments in divine worship, depend as much on the sovereign pleasure of the great legislator, as the appointments themselves; and if so, we are equally bound to regard that order and connexion, in their administrations, as to observe them at all. Whoever, therefore, objects to that order, or deviates from it, opposes that sovereign authority by which those branches of worship were first instituted. For instance, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, it is allowed on all hands, are positive ordinances, and as such they depend for their very existence on the sovereign will of God; consequently, which of them should be administered prior to the other, (as well as to what persons, in what way, and for what end,) must depend entirely on the will of their divine author. His determination must fix their order, and his revelations must guide our practice. And as the Lord's Supper is an ordinance appointed by the Lord for a special purpose of his own, we must look to his word for instruction into its nature, design, manner of observance, and the qualifications of its participants. Its nature and manner of observance, he has taught us, both by precept and example, at the time of its institution, when he blessed and broke the bread and gave it to his disciples to eat, and blessed the cup and gave it to them all to drink, closing the scene with the injunction, "This do in the remembrance of me." In this short precept he has not only enjoined on his deciples a continued observance of this institution, but has also expressed the design by which they must be actuated. "A remembrance of him." And that there might be no difficulty in determining in what respect he is to be remembered. He adds, that it is to "show forth his death." To attend to it properly, we deem it important not only to be right in form, but, also in design; for the Lord has as particularly expressed the intent with which it should be observed, as that it should be observed at all. The apostle has charged the corruption of this ordinance by the Corinthian Church, and all their unworthy participations of it to an oversight or disregard of its design; "not decerning the Lord's body." 1 Cor., 11, 29; many persons seem to have lost the design

of this ordinance, by considering it principally as an expression of fellowship, when in fact its expressing fellowship at all is only an incidental consequence, arising from its nature and design. The real design seems to be two-fold: 1st. To refresh in the minds of the communicants, a remembrance of Christ's death; and 2d. To shew forth, or publish it to the world by this figure. The instructions given to do it "in remembrance" of Christ's "discerning his body," and to "shew forth his death," not only prove the design of this ordinance and the importance of due reference thereto, by those who observe it, but also plainly indicate some of the necessary qualifications of all proper communicants. 1st. They must be able to discern the Lord's body. This we understand to embrace, in some good degree, a knowledge of the doctrine of atonement. This flesh and blood cannot reveal to them but only our father which is in heaven. This includes an idea of the divinity of the Saviour as necessary to give virtue to the sacrifice of atonement, and none can call him Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. All proper communicants must, therefore, have Jesus Christ revealed unto them experimentally, so as to be able to lay hold on him as their Saviour, as the end of the law for righteousness; or in other words, viewing the claims of the divine law as satisfied in his flesh for every believer. 2d. They must cherish a remembrance of Christ. To be prepared to do this, they must not only have some proper understanding of the atonement, but also to feel their great need of an interest in it. They must view themselves as justly condemned by the holy law of God, and exposed to his wrath, with the consciousness that nothing but the blood of atonement, can procure their relief; and thus be brought to accept it with hearty approbation and gratitude, and to rely upon it exclusively for deliverance from condemnation, and for admission into the divine favor. Such discoveries as these prepare an individual to cherish with pleasure the remembrance of one from whom he has received such unspeakable benefits, and such a pleasing, grateful remembrance only must be designed to be promoted by this sacred rite. 3d. They must "shew forth his death, or publish it to the world." To be prepared to do this heartily, requires such a deep sense of obligation to the author of salvation, as shall produce in the subject of it, a readiness to own it before all the world, although such an acknowledgment be in effect to stand as a witness against himself of his own shame and guilt, if he fail to live in the daily discharge of such an obligation thus conferred. Every communicant hereby says to God and to the world, that he is not his own, that he has been redeemed from the jaws of death by the blessed Son of God, and that he is under every possible obligation to devote unto him his body and his spirit, which are his. He hereby acknowledges the will of God to be the only proper rule of his life, and is to be considered as hereby calling on all that behold him, to witness his baseness and ingratitude, if it be not his future desire, and endeavor to advance his kingdom and promote his glory, by all the means put in his power. The Apostle, therefore, exhorts all those who would not unworthily approach the sacred board, to examine themselves previous to eating, on all the important points of proper qualifications, not whether they are worthy on account of their high attainments in holiness, but to inquire what views they have of the nature and design of this ordinance; what of that solemn scene to

which it refers; whether by faith they are able to eat the flesh and drink the blood of the blessed sacrifice of atonement; and whether they can now cherish a greatful remembrance of his love, and are now ready to renew an entire dedication of themselves to the Lord, and so to eat under the influence of all that fear, love, solemnity and reverence, which such considerations are calculated to inspire.

From this view of the subject, it would appear that none but believers can properly come around the table of the Lord. But this is an ordinance to be observed by the disciples of Christ in the Church or in an associate capacity, this will fully appear from, Acts 20—7. When the deciples came together to break bread, &c. 1 Cor. 11, 18. When he came together in the church, &c. "Have ye not houses to eat and drink in, or dispise ye the church of God;" "Wherefore my brethren, when ye come together to eat," &c.; and such was the example given by our Saviour at its institution. It is therefore not only necessary that those who associate for this purpose, should be believers, but should have made such a profession of their faith, as should be satisfactory to those with whom they were about to associate. It is not religion alone that entitles any man to church privileges; this is a matter between God and the soul, and so remains until a credibly profession is made. No church can consistently receive any member into the enjoyment of its privileges, until that individual has made such a profession as in some measure meets the views of that church. Otherwise there would be no distinction between the church and the world. That baptism is necessary to the scriptural profession of faith, must be inferred from its frequent introduction in the scripture, as a duty consequent upon faith, as "he that believeth and is baptized," &c. The doctrine contained in Gal. 3—27, is very plain on this subject—"As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." This putting on Christ by baptism we understand not to be really and spiritually, but professionally, Dr. Clarke on this place, calls receiving baptism, "a public proof that they had received Christ as their Lord and Saviour." Dr Scott here says that "faith in Christ was publicly professed in baptism." Mr. Henry in his commentary on this passage, says that "faith in Christ was what they professed in baptism—baptism is now the solemn rite of admission into the visible church." After the concurrence with us of so many eminent divines of different denominations, in the sentiment that baptism is the proper scriptural profession of faith; and after having shewn the necessity of a credible profession of faith to church membership and church privileges; and that communion is a church act—it must be manifest that no unbaptized person, although a believer, is entitled to this ordinance,—and as baptism, and the Lord's supper are positive institutions of God, and the order of their observance laid down in the New Testament, we are bound to comply with the order that heaven has made, and that baptism was an ordinance of God, the submission to it was required, and that it was administered to multitudes, before the Sacred Supper was heard of, or had an existence, are undeniable facts. The venerable John, the twelve Apostles, and the son of God incarnate, all united in recommending baptism, at a time when it would have been impious to have eaten bread and drank wine as an ordinance of divine worship. Baptism therefore, had the priority in point of institution, which is a presumptive evidence that it has and ever will

have a prior claim on our obedience. Nor can we with the New Testament in our hands, and a jealousy for the glory of God at heart, believe baptism to be that indefinite any thing, and every thing, that the various imaginations of men may suggest. The argument stands thus, the observance of the ordinance is a church act, a credible and scriptural profession is necessary to church privileges, and that baptism is necessary to a scriptural profession of religion—unbaptized persons, therefore, are not qualified for admission to this ordinance.

So far as fellowship is expressed by this communion, we have said it was altogether consequental on the nature and design of this ordinance. We will explain ourselves thus: So far as the bare eating bread, and drinking the cup by each individual is considered seperately, it is to remember and shew the Lord's death. But as it is an act in which individuals unite, by such union they virtually say to the world; not that they approve of every act of each others past life, not that they agree in every, the most minute religious sentiment—but that they agree in what they are now doing, as one body in Christ. Now as the commandment goes to the design as well as to the form, if it should afterwards appear that they had different designs, they will so far have made a profession of agreement when there was none. This may be done ignorantly. But if such a union should be entered into by those who know they differ in disign, and in their views of the proper qualification of communicants, it must result in the following consequences, viz: That they make a false profession of an agreement when they know there is none, and lightly and irreverently trifle with the word of God, and one of his most solemn institutions, by countenancing its solemnization by persons who they could not believe were qualified.

Here without explanation we might seem to encourage a practice which occurs but too commonly in churches, and which we deem very reprehensible. For want of entire fellowship with some one member of the church, there are many brethren who seldom or never observe this ordinance, and so violate one of the most positive injunctions of our Lord, given to all his disciples, "this do in remembrance of me." But they will ask what they shall do? We will endeavor to instruct them; we have said it was a church act, to be observed by church members, none therefore, who are not qualified for this service, are fit for church membership. Let such members as feel afflicted, endeavor with meekness to have the offender reclaimed. If this cannot be done, let him be excommunicated. If they cannot obtain either of these points, they are clear, they have done their duty, and the affliction is now removed from the offender, to the church that justifies him. We should learn, however, to pay great respect to the judgment of churches in such cases, and we shall often find such alledged offences, rather imaginary than real. It is true there may be some members in almost every church, in whom we may not have all that confidence we could wish, but if we had good reasons for receiving them, and their conduct has not been such as to bring them under the censure of the church, our bare suspicions, should not interfere with our (or their) church privileges, much less church duties. To withdraw silently from the communion, in case of offence, is to leave the church to bear the reproach, and the cause of Christ to suffer, while we only seek to shield our own heads; this

is selfish, uncharistian, and contrary to the command, "bear ye one another's burdens."

The solemn injunction, "do this in remembrance of me," should we think, bear heavy upon the consciences of all those who say they have hope in the death of Christ, and yet have never united themselves to the church, and consequently have never obeyed this precept. If he is not worthy to be obeyed and honored by them here, they would do well to consider on what ground they expect to be honored by him hereafter. It becomes the duty of every church to have this ordinance regularly administered among them, and to have all their members so instructed and disciplined, that there may be no barrier to its observance by every member in the church.

From what we have said, it will appear that there are many professors of religion whom we cannot invite to associate with us in this ordinance, nor except an invitation from them:—

1st. We cannot invite those who deny the divinity of Christ, for this destroys the whole virtue of the atonement which is here intended to be set forth.

2d. We cannot invite those who refuse the cup to the laity, for our Lord hath said drink ye all of it, nor those who worship the elements of the supper as the real body and blood of Christ, for he himself calls them the bread and the cup, even after the consecration and distribution of them to his deciples, and requires them to repeat it in remembrance of him.

3d. We cannot thus associate with professed unbelievers, for they connot descern the Lord's body, and so must partake unworthily, and be guilty of the body and blood of Christ; and we by associating with them should give countenance to their sin, and become partakers of their guilt

4th. We cannot associate in this ordinance with those who have never made that public profession of their faith by baptism, which we believe the scriptures require of every believer. It is true that it has been common for our brethren entertaining different views of this subject from ourselves, to charge us with bigotry and illiberality. It may be from ignorance, that we think as we do, but we are persuaded (let others judge as they may,) that it is not from any disposition to be illiberal; we are told by the Apostle Paul, that "to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean to, him it is unclean," Rom. 14.14. It would therefore be our sin and not liberality, to practice differently, believing as we do. It is no doubt painful to the feelings of many of our brethren, to be so often lectured by their sympathizing friends, on the oppressive bondage under which they are held. But brethren, if the spirit of Christ dwell in you, the strictness of his law is not bondage but liberty, and you would choose rather to please God than men. You will discover, we think, by observation, that most of the reasonings of those who reflect upon you, are founded more upon carnal policy than the word of God, and are addressed to the feelings more than to the enlightened understanding. We would exhort you, brethren, to fortify your minds with the word of consolation left you by our Lord; "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake," and take for your warning against yielding to the temptations of the flesh; "He that doth not bear his cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

After all the aspersions of illiberality and uncharitableness cast upon us by our mixed communion brethren, we can hardly be persuaded that many of them are anxious to commune with us, if we felt ourselves at liberty to invite them. We are at a loss to know why our armenian brethren should desire it, when they take so many occasions, both from the pulpit and the press, to misrepresent, to ridicule, and reprobate our views of the doctrine of election, predestination and perseverance in grace, we cannot conceive how consistent calvinistic Peado-baptists can wish it, when under existing circumstances, we should be required to dispense with baptism as a pre-requisite which they will not dispense with, or admit sprinkling to be baptism, against our judgment and consciences, setting aside the word of God. There appears to us, to be insuperable difficulties in the way of mixed communion. We must admit ministers of other denominations, while they preach doctrines for which we would exclude our own. We must sometimes unite with members that have been excommunicated by us. that have a regular membership in a church of another denomination. We must have some pre-requisites or admit all the world, and how are we ever to agree on these pre-requisites, mixed communion does not at all reconcile the parties who practice it, nor soften their asperities. Whoever will take the trouble to read the periodicals. published by the different Peado-baptist denominations, will find that there is as much party feeling, and harshness of controversy existing between those denominations, although they commune together, as there is between the baptists and either of them.

In fine, when we observe how cold mixed communicants are in the practice of it, after all their warmth in contending for the principle, when we observe how many decline the practice altogether, while many others rise up from the same table only to unsheath against each other, the sword of controversy; we are constrained to inquire "how can two walk together except they be agreed." Far be it from us to cherish any unfriendly sentiment, toward any of our christain breatren, or to encourage such sentiments to be cherished by you. Far be it from us to arrogate to ourselves, pretensions of greater wisdom or piety than is professed by others, we would rather pray the father of mercies to hasten the time when all his children shall be of one mind and see eye to eye, and then they will be ready and not until then, to unite in every christian duty. Nor can we conceive it to be in our province to alter the positive institutions of God, or in any way to occommodate them to the capricious views of others. To dispense with the positive appointments of Jesus Christ, or to reverse the order of their administration in condescension to weak believers, and with a view to the glory of God. cannot be right, for God never gave power to any man, to change his ordinances, or to dispense with them. 'Tis not for any inferior person to alter the stamp and impression the prince's command. None can coin ordinances but Christ, and till he call them in. they ought to be current among us; God is a jealous God, and careful of his soverignty, therefore as the salvation of men, ought to be dear to us, so the glory of God, which consisteth in that his orders be kept, ought to be much more dear to us, what is dispensing with a positive appointment, but laying it aside or conniving at a neglect of it, on such occasions in which it was commanded to be administered. Now, for

us to admit unbaptized, (that is unimmersed,) persons to the Lord's table, would be, to lay entirely aside, and annul the ordinance. To dispense with a divine institution for the edification of weak believers, and invert the order of God's appointments, and break his positive laws, with a view to his glory, would seem to border on that hateful maxim, "let us do evil that good may come;" a position that the pen of inspiration execrates, which every virtuous mind abhors.

But that no pretence of honoring God, any plea of being useful to men, can possibly deserve the least regard, if the measures which must be pursued to obtain the end, interfere with the divine revealed will, we learn from various facts recorded in the Bible. Uzza, for instance, when he put forth his hand to support the tottering ark, thought, no doubt, he was doing honor to him who dwelt between the cherubims on the mercy seat; and at the same time, as that sacred coffer was of the last importance in the ancient sanctuary, he showed an equal regard to the edification of his fellow worshippers, by endeavoring to preserve it from injury. But notwithstanding this fair pretext, nay, the man after God's own heart, saw but little amiss in his conduct, (perhaps he thought he deserved praise, as the ark, with all that pertained to it, and its whole management was of positive appointments,) he whose name is JEALOUS, was greatly offended. The sincere, the well meaning man having no command nor example for what he did, fell under Jehovah's anger and lost his life, as the reward of his officiousness. And as the Holy Ghost has recorded the fact so circumstantially, we have reason to consider it as a warning to all, of the danger there is in tampering with positive ordinances; and as a standing evidence that God will have his cause supported and his appointments administered in his own way. The case of Saul. and the language of Samuel, to that disobedient monarch, inculcate the same truth, "the people," said Saul to the venerable prophet, "took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God, in Gilgal," and Samuel said, "hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and in sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord—behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry." Remarkable words. The King of Israel, we find, pleaded a regard for the worship of God. The cattle were spared that Jehovah's altar might be furnished with plenty of the finest sacrifices. But Samuel soon overruled this fair pretence. He quickly informed the infatuated Prince, that obedience to divine appointments, especially in such duties as depend entirely on an express command, (as the utter destruction of Amalek did, and as communion at the Lord's table now does,) is better in the sight of God, than hecatombs of bleeding sacrifices or clouds of smoking incense; and consequently, better than a misapplied tenderness to any of our fellow creatures, or a misguided zeal to promote their peace and edification. At the same time the prophet assures him, that when the Most High commands, nothing can excuse a non-performance, because disobedience to a plain, positive, known command, is justly classed with the sin of idolatry.

We would now, in conclusion, ask, has the divine Savior changed his ordinances, or the manner of their observance? if he has not, we are bound to observe them as he delivered them, and he had the room, where he instituted the supper, prepared for him and his dis-

ciples, no others were prepared for, no others were invited. If he had been fond of a motley mixture, a heterogenious mass of professors, why did he not invite the Pharisees and other religious denominations of the day, to participate in the supper; we have the example of the Savior and of the Apostles on the subject, and we see that neither he nor they invited every body that considered themselves qualified for this ordinance, but such as they considered prepared for it, the Savior invited the disciples alone; the Apostles required them to continue "in their doctrine and fellowship," before they break bread together. The pattern is given, and if we violate that order, we are disobediently stubborn, and consequently fall under the charge of Idolatry, revolting idea, that those who profess to love God, should so act, as to be justly called idolators; we warn you, therefore, to be careful in what way you observe the positive commands of God, for if you do not do it according to his directions, it is not pleasing in his sight; therefore, associate in this ordinance, with none but his disciples, those who have manifested their discipleship by putting on Christ; Gal. 3, 27; with none who do not continue in the Apostles' doctrine and your fellowship. Finally, brethren, be of the same mind, and may the God of all grace be with you all.—AMEN.